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Frances Hanan to Mr. President (12 October 1962)

Frances Hanan

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unsympathetic

October 12, 1962

Dear Mr. President:

I would like to be different and write a sympathetic word for the southern people. You may call me a fanatic, rabble rouser, or white trash (a Denver marshall's words).

First, let me say I think what happened at Ole' Miss was a tragic thing. This isn't the first time that angry people have turned into a frenzied mob and done things they will be ashamed of all their lives; nor it won't be the last time. I can't see these southern people, officials included, taking all the burden of this tragedy. It is all well and good to set back and condemn and try to tell other people how to live and feel. However, I was taught that you should sweep under your own doorstep first; or, that the one without sin should cast the first stone.

The state of Michigan and their officials are strong advocates of Civil Rights. However, they have a town in the suburbs of Detroit where no negro can own property. This same town has a fabulous camp (for residents only) for week-ends, vacations, or just a day. Now mind you, this great state believes in all rights and privileges of the negro being upheld (in the South, that is). There are also at least 4 and probably more, golf courses that are private clubs if you telephone, but suddenly become public when they see the color of your skin.

My feelings along the line of helping this transition are this. Instead of the NAACP spending all this money for schools, neighborhoods, etc. to accept the negro people, they should encourage the negro to take pride in himself and his race and try to improve the morals, vice, and corruption caused by their people. If you will check statistics of almost all large cities, I am sure you will find a large percentage of arrests and trouble are caused by negro people. I do not wish to belittle the many fine, decent negro people of the USA. I know many that I would not criticize in any way.

Mr. Meredith has won. He is going to college at Ole' Miss. Has he made one friend there? I know he has made many enemies there. There are two dead and many injured. You, the NAACP, their sympathizers, must accept a share of this guilt, because this would not have happened had it not been for him. Was it worth it? Has he really accomplished anything except another blow the Russians can use as propaganda. I know it seems like a slow process; but better this, than hatred, ill feelings, and bloodshed. All for one negro to go to a college that doesn't want him, when 50 or more colleges would welcome him with open arms. The South has lived and felt this way for over 100 years. They cannot change this feeling at once. This transition can and will be made if you will please give them enough time.

With Lincoln's great words, I will close. "With Malice towards none, and charity for all".

Sincerely,

Francis Henan

P.S. I still think you are a great President but disagree with you on this problem.

James Hansen
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Denver (28) Colorado

Mr. James Meredith
Unit of Mississippi
Dept. of Mississippi

